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AN EXHIBITION OF DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS  
" IN OIL AND MIXED MEDIA

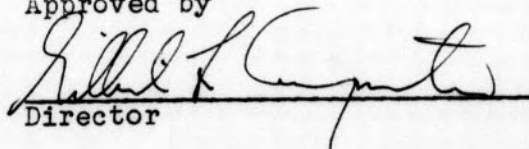
by

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A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro  
January, 1965

Approved by

  
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HOBBS, EMILIE MILLS. An Exhibition of Drawings and Paintings  
in Oil and Mixed Media. (1965) Directed by: Mr. Gilbert F.  
Carpenter.

pp.10

This thesis is an exhibit of eight pen and ink drawings, eleven oil paintings on canvas and seven paintings in mixed media. The subject matter is derived from various aspects of nature. This document is a record of the thesis, an exhibit held in the Weatherspoon Gallery, January 10 - 30, 1965. Information about all of the works including title, size and media is presented here. The works included in the exhibit are reproduced in color slides. The printed catalogue is included as an appendix. A brief essay discussing the works exhibited is also presented.

## PREFACE

This thesis is an exhibit of pen and ink drawings, oil paintings on canvas and paintings in mixed media of liquitex and pastel on paper. Following the introductory section is the catalogue documenting the thesis.

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## INTRODUCTION

That one may become enlightened as to the source, and therefore the meaning of the thesis, these introductory notes have been written.

### The Paintings

"Every landscape is a condition of the soul," said Amiel, the nineteenth century Swiss poet. I am a painter of landscape, of the hills and seas. For me, my spirit and my soul are one. I paint the parts of nature that are known by my soul. I do not paint what I see. I paint what I have seen. My paintings reassert the feeling I have for nature. I paint about nature because nature is what I know.

My discovery of the sea came in childhood. It was then that I spent the major part of my life on the water. At about the same time, I discovered, too, the place where a tree grows out of the earth. This spot held, for me, several explanations for my ponderings about life and creation.

In those days, I would occasionally lie on my stomach, next to my grazing horse's muzzle, looking at every blade of grass as a world in itself, and digging with my fingers to find where the tree bark stopped and the roots began.

Getting very close to everything -- projecting myself to the inside of the things I saw -- was very important to me then as it is to my painting now.

I grew up on low, rolling land surrounded by water. To the south lay sand dunes and ocean; to the north were bays enclosed by rocky hills; far away to the east, international waters were gradually chopping away at the lay of the land; to the west, brown tides lapped at tugboat water-lines and the cement legs of bridges. I looked north, east and south. Everything I needed was there. I turned my back on the west due to the distrust I felt for the vertical tensions of the city with its rushing people. Mountains, with their vertical tensions, aroused the same distrust. I could only imagine this about mountains for I had never seen any. Now I have seen mountains. I have even ventured to their summits, believing I might overcome the feeling. I distrust them still. I will remain in my bays and pastures. In the openness of flat land and seas whose horizons stretch past the point perceived by the human eye, are the aspects of nature I know and trust. This is, as it was in my youth, the condition of my soul.

As I began to realize that I had to paint -- that it was not simply desire which drove me, but necessity -- I gradually recalled the seas and trees and pastures of my childhood. The source of my work has been, since that time, those parts of nature into which I projected myself and which I remember today from my collected experiences.



The diffused light of the paintings, the low key of color, the softened edges, are the result of the imagery being removed by time to the realm of recollection. It is the time lapse between the happening, or the discovery, and the recollection of it, which softens everything in the painting. Perhaps, admittedly, it is not so much as if one were looking at a dreamer's vision, but rather at the vision of one who recalls with nostalgia. This, of course, has its romantic implications, which I do not deny. (In a century and a country which likes to think of itself as anti-romantic, it is curious to note painters such as Kline, Pollock, Rothko and Still, all of whom are possessed with romantic vision. The characteristics of such vision are seen in their work -- restlessness and yearning, self-identification with nature, infinite distance and solitude, the tragedy of existence and the inaccessibility of the ideal.)<sup>1</sup>

The paintings are small. The size asserts the intimacy I feel for the parts of nature wherein I wander. Of themselves, the seas and vast horizons are not intimate aspects of nature. However, the personal identification with these vista-like aspects transforms them into highly intimate areas.

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<sup>1</sup>These characteristics of romantic art are mentioned by Marcel Brion in Romantic Art (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), p.7, but he does not refer to painters of the school of Abstract-Expressionism. It is through my own research on romantic art that I have found in many painters of the Abstract-Expressionist School a vision that is in the tradition of such nineteenth century painters as Albert Ryder and William Turner.

The paintings are quiet by nature of their color and because my memories are soundless. Without the suggested silence, the intimacy would be lost. If any sound at all is heard, it is, at most, muffled.

I think I hear something. Like the sonic boom, the sound began before it reached my ears, and it continues forever in space. As I hear the reverberation, I know the sound is passing me and going beyond me. Though I can no longer hear it, it is not totally lost. While that sonic sound travels through space beyond my own realm, it is still a sound to me because I have the power of remembering. I have learned something...that I can hear silence.

### The Drawings

"With all its eyes the creature world beholds openness." This opening line of the Eighth Duino Elegy by Rilke relates to the theme of the pony drawings. I would suggest, within this context, that the drawings, as well as the paintings of the hillsides and seas, in addition to being results of recollection, are slices of nature as might be seen by a field mouse or pony or seagull.

As a child, until I had a horse of my own, I would often pretend that I was a horse. I saw everything with what I believed to be horse's eyes, and thought with what I believed was a horse's mind. It was a mind whose instinct was to run free or to linger in some far away forest.

I have discovered in my life among animals that they possess remarkable spirit, individuality and character. At times I wonder whether or not they possess the equivalent of the so-called human soul. I believe that such ponderings

have to do with my pantheistic sense of the world.

It is this strong empathy with horses especially that is the point of departure for the drawings. The portrayal of the horses, or ponies, in the graphic media is most satisfactory, for physically they are very graphic animals. Even disregarding their skeletal and muscular structure, they still possess a striking shape or outline. It is my aim, then, not to show my knowledge of anatomy, but to pull out the spirit of the animal. This is done by placing the figure of the pony deep in its surroundings of grassy openness. The figure is usually placid, for this is the aspect of its temperament which interests me -- as opposed to the fiery spirit that delighted Delacroix and Géricault.

I recall a farm on Long Island where I worked for several summers. There were one hundred acres of land and approximately one hundred ponies. The latter number varied according to births, deaths and sales, but it remained fairly stable.

The grass the ponies lived in was very tall. Often I would sit in it, near some pony, and peer through its patterns. All I could find of that nearby pony was a nose, a mane, part of a tail and a fat, round barrel. The legs disappeared in the green fullness of the rye just below the knees. The tail was similarly lost in the growth. The outline of this pony body created wonderful shapes of negative grass space.

This experience was very much like sitting at the water's edge on a windy, dark summer's day, watching the

changing water shapes between the pier pilings.

Everything very close, and I, very far away, carried from the real world of sounds to the soundless world of images, shadowy with shapes...a world of dreams where nothing in the world that I come from is free to come with me. My essence has traveled into an untouched world. Only the sound of the sonic boom will shake me and bring me back. The sound scares the ponies and they run to where I can no longer see them. The water surfaces tremble. This other world is gone, and I wonder where I am and who I was before. If I was not the pony, I must have been the seagull.

### The Mixed Media

"Experimentation is liberation." Not long ago I wrote this sentence twenty-seven times, each time under the line above. I had reached the end of the paper and I could go no further. The repeated lines created a shape rather like a melting rectangle. I recall that I was angry when I wrote -- angry at myself for not experimenting -- and doggedly I sat rereading over and over again the statement that was written out of anger and frustration.

The mixed media paintings return again to landscape and seascape, now more abstracted from reality than the oil paintings. It is the medium I choose for experimentation simply because it does not become confused with the drawing and oil painting. Because of the fast drying quality of the acrylic paint used, the mixed media induces the speedy and the accidental. Working in this manner I often discover new images for later work in oil. It is in the mixed media that I often find new technical means as well as new color



relationships and effects to work into the oils.

The black and white character of these paintings is often more pronounced than in the oils and drawings. A different sense of space is created by this sharper color contrast and by the crisp lines or edges. In the oils and drawings, soft edges, which blend the positive and negative areas together, do not permit the rapid optical flipping of spatial position that occurs in the mixed media paintings.

I know that space is intangible, and yet I experience the space in my work as a tangible factor. By this I mean that the feeling for the space is as important as the feeling for the subject. To disregard the importance of the space in the particular work would be to disregard a major statement concerning the subject. What space is -- this is the point of departure for the work in mixed media.

It is with this touchable space that I seek for something new with my mixing of media. It is when I am doing these little paintings that I delight in defying my inner-critic who today tells me, "No, not today." I must remain in my realm of grays and mists until that time when the sonic boom and tubes of reds and yellows shatter the silence and tremor of the hills and seas wherein I still must be a wanderer.



## APPENDIX

## Catalogue of the Exhibit

## The Paintings

Title	Medium	Size	Date
1. Winter Sea	oil*	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x16" **	spring '64
2. Hodgkin I - Snow Tree	oil	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ x12"	spring '64
3. Hodgkin II - Land- scape with Pony	oil	20x20"	spring '64
4. Small Sea I	oil	8x10"	summer '64
5. Small Sea II - Mauretania	oil	8x9 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	summer '64
6. Small Sea III	oil	10x9"	fall '64
7. Nimbus	oil	22x22"	fall '64
8. Blizzard Trees	oil	14x19"	fall '64
9. Filly and Spring Thaw	oil	20x18"	fall '64
10. Wave	oil	24x36"	spring '64
11. Pan	oil	26x36"	spring '64
12. Yellow Fog - Highland Light	liquitex and pastel	6x8 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	fall '64
13. Stormy Sea - Night	liquitex, char- coal, pastel	5x8 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	fall '64
14. Night Breakers	liquitex and pastel	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x8 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	fall '64
15. The Field	liquitex and pastel	6x7"	fall '64
16. Sea Motion I	liquitex and pastel	9x12"	fall '64
17. Sea Motion II	liquitex and pastel	9x12"	fall '64
18. Sea Motion III	liquitex and pastel	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x5 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	fall '64

(\* all oil paintings are on canvas)

(\*\* with all dimensions, height precedes width)

## Catalogue of the Exhibit (continued)

## The Drawings

	Title	Medium	Size	Date
19.	The Pony I	pen and ink*	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	spring '64
20.	The Pony II	pen and ink	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x5 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	spring '64
21.	The Pony IV	pen and ink	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x8"	fall '64
22.	The Pony V	pen and ink	7x6 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	fall '64
23.	The Pony VI	pen and ink	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	fall '64
24.	The Pony VII	pen and ink	7x6"	fall '64
25.	The Pony VIII	pen and ink	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x13 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	fall '64
26.	Self-Portrait- D.H.	felt tip pen	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x10"	fall '63

(\* all drawings are on paper)